

## **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MADERA**

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**RICK FARINELLI**  
**SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT 3**

May 20, 2013

Mr. Dave Navecky  
U.S. Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, SW  
Washington DC 20423-0001

RE: Docket No. FD 35724 (CA HSR)

Mr. Navecky:

These comments are being submitted on behalf of the constituents for District 3 of Madera County.

We are the only County impacted by the High Speed Rail project without any potential plans for a station in the near or long term. We gain little economic benefit, yet bear the burden of having more track mileage than any other County in the State. We will potentially see a negative economic effect from the facility resulting in higher cost for development in the vicinity of the project, and a burden on the County's economic base, particularly our agricultural community.

Furthermore, the project will require substantial construction materials including large amounts of construction grade aggregates which could severely impact regional and local traffic routes unless existing locally permitted resources are utilized for the construction of the project. We have seen significant damage to our local roads resulting from other governmental construction projects. We would request your Board's recommendation to the California High Speed Rail Authority that wherever possible local aggregate resources be utilized in the construction and ongoing maintenance of the Merced-Fresno Section of the High Speed Train. Also, an agreement to repair our roads for any and all damage caused by the construction of this facility is appropriate and consistent with other government projects.

The EIS identifies potential water and hydrology impacts of the project. Madera County has adopted an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) which calls for a complete water balance of all new urban development within Madera County. We would urge your Board's consideration to implement this requirement as it relates to the Merced-Fresno High Speed Rail project. We are currently in a severe overdraft status of the groundwater basin (approximately 100,000 acre-feet annually), and, as a result we have required all new development within the groundwater aquifer to meet a 1:1 water balance. This is accomplished by a number of methods that include, but are not limited to:

- a. Utilizing Reclaimed wastewater;
- b. Purchasing surface water from various entities; and
- c. Recharge basins.

The project is being constructed to serve an urban population through a rural community and, therefore, should meet the adopted Madera County IRWMP. This document does not permit the project to take credit for the historical agricultural water usage of the properties impacted when calculating for the water balance. The California High Speed Rail Authority could meet this requirement by constructing a number of recharge basins

and implementing a surface water recharge program within the County that would mitigate the impact upon the aquifer during project construction and ongoing maintenance of all rail facilities.

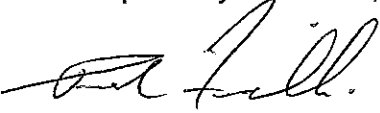
The project must identify its water sources and supplies for the projects water demands during construction, and after construction. In addition, the project must mitigate its impact to the groundwater and surface water supplies during construction, and after construction, as noted above.

Moreover, the growth inducing nature of the High Speed Rail project will have lasting effects on infrastructure for District 3. The construction of the project will directly impact existing infrastructure utility systems such as water, wastewater and drainage delivery. Additionally, the construction of the project will impact the County's ability to comprehensively expand these utility systems if they are altered, obstructed or removed by High Speed Rail. According to the Department of Finance, population projections estimate that Madera County will have some of the most rapid growth in the Central Valley (increases of approximately 2.94% annually, highest in the Central Valley, 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the State overall). This theory is reflected in many other agencies projections over similar timeframes. It is reasonable to assume that there will be growth inducing impacts of the project due to the fact that housing in the County is considerably more affordable than other areas thereby making it convenient and fiscally beneficial for people to purchase housing in the County while commuting via High Speed Rail to job centers such as the Bay Area or Los Angeles. Any inability to efficiently provide essential municipal utilities to existing as well as these projected future residents is a concern. We would request your agency consider these potential impacts and appropriate mitigation measures as part of any decision for the High Speed Rail.

The United States currently does not have any standards for a High Speed Rail system, as stated in the EIS. I would suggest the Authority begin the process of adopting objective standards, prior to the commencement of construction. The EIS has stated that the HSR would not create regional growth but would serve the existing and planned populations of the Central Valley. Substantial evidence must be utilized to support this statement. Currently, we have some of the lowest home costs in the State. It is conceivable that the HSR would affect regional growth by allowing an individual to travel from the City of Fresno station to downtown San Francisco in 90 minutes. This would allow an individual to work in San Francisco where the salaries are often three times higher than a similar job in the San Joaquin Valley, while being able to commute in less than two hours while living in Madera, Fresno, Chowchilla, and Merced.

However, the people of District 3 stand to be impacted by the CAHSR, therefore I am submitting these comments on behalf of those constituents.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Farinelli", written in a cursive style.

Rick Farinelli  
District 3 Supervisor